

THE
ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN,
OR
A WINTER'S DAY.
A P O E M.

By the Rev. GERALD FITZGERALD, F.T.C.D.
AUTHOR OF THE INJURED ISLANDERS.
THE SECOND EDITION,
WITH ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS.



And many a Blessing follows as we part

D U B L I N:

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M,DCC,LXXX.

MEMORANDUM
FOR THE RECORD
SUBJECT: [illegible]
DATE: [illegible]
BY: [illegible]



[illegible text]

TO

SIR FIELDING OULD.

SIR,

CONSCIOUS that this Poem without a Dedication would appear as Solitary in the world, as a Sportsman without a companion in the field, I have taken the liberty of annexing your name to it, as I know your attachment to the rural Muse. I have besides, Sir, a still stronger motive to justify this address, — an earnest desire of embracing any opportunity however unimportant, of testifying my sincere affection for a long approved, and a long respected friend.---with regard to the Poem itself, the exercise of Shooting which it principally describes, is not, I acknowledge, a new, nor, if simply considered, an interesting subject; but its attendant circumstances, and the scenes of nature which it opens to
our

DEDICATION.

View, are not only capable of giving it variety, but of exciting useful, and entertaining reflections: how far the representation I have given of it, verifies this remark, depends upon the taste and judgment of my Readers; if they can derive any degree of pleasure from the perusal of this description, adequate to that which I have frequently enjoyed in the practice of the amusement itself, I shall be sufficiently rewarded, as I have no other concern for its success, than what the wish to please must necessarily inspire.

I am, Sir,

with the greatest esteem,

your much obliged friend,

and most obedient servant,

GERALD FITZGERALD.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,
February 4th 1779.



T H E
ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN,
O R
A WINTER'S DAY.

—*Studio fallente laborem.*

THE feather'd Game that haunt the hoary Plains,
When ice-bound Winter hangs in crystal Chains,
The mimick Thunder of the deep-mouth'd Gun
By Lightning usher'd, and by Death out-run,
The Spaniel springing on the new-fall'n Prey,
The Friend attendant, and the Spirits gay ;
These are the Scenes which lur'd my earliest Days,
And Scenes like these continue still to please.

Oft

8 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

Oft when I've seen the new-fledg'd Morn arise,
 And spread its Pinions to the Polar Skies, 10
 Th' expanded Air with gelid Fragrance fan,
 Brace the slack Nerves, and animate the Man;
 Swift from the College, and from Cares I flew,
 (For studious Cares solicit something new)
 From tinkling Bells that wake the Truant's Fears,
 And letter'd Trophies of three thousand Years;
 Thro' length'ning Streets with sanguine Hopes I glide,
 The fatal Tube depending at my Side;
 No busy Vender dins with clam'rous Call,
 No rattling Carriage drives me to the Wall; 20
 The close-compacted Shops, their Commerce laid,
 In Silence frown like Mansions of the Dead---
 Save, where the footy-shrowded Wretch cries "*sweep*,"
 Or drowsy Watchman stalks in broken Sleep,
 'Scap'd from the hot-brain'd Youth of midnight Fame,
 Whose Mirth is Mischief, and whose Glory Shame---

Save,



Save, that from yonder Stew the batter'd Beau,
With tott'ring Steps comes reeling to and fro---
Mark, how the live-long Revels of the Night
Stare in his Face, and stupify his Sight! 30
Mark the loose Frame, yet impotently bold,
'Twixt Man and Beast, divided Empire hold!--
Amphibious Wretch! the Prey of Passion's Tide!
The Wreck of Riot! and the Mock of Pride!

But we, my Friend, with Aims far diff'rent borne,
Seek the fair Fields, and court the blushing Morn;
With sturdy Sinews, brush the frozen Snow,
While crimson Colours on our Faces glow,
Since Life is short, prolong it while we can,
And vindicate the Ways of Health to Man. 40

To yonder Vales that spread beneath the Hills,
Where MILTOWN River winds with murm'ring Rills,

B

Onward

10 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

Onward our Course diversify'd we bend,
 And Right and Left, with anxious Care attend;
 The poring Spaniel, studious as he goes,
 Scents ev'ry Leaf that on the Margin grows,
 Sudden he stops!---he eyes the plashy Spring!
 The frightened Snipe darts upward on the Wing,
 With shrill-ton'd Pipe implores the passive Air,
 In vain! for Death e'en persecutes him there--- 50
 Another springs! but happier in his Flight,
 'Scapes the loud Gun, and vanishes from Sight.

The Sport begun, and bright'ning to our View,
 We charge, prepar'd its Pleasures to pursue;
 Lo! at our Side the gay transparent Gleam
 Of frozen Lake that skirts the purling Stream---
 Its splendid Form by Nature's Hand display'd,
 Its Margin rich with pendent Gems array'd,

I

Its

THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN. 11

Its inlaid Figures, and mosaic wrought,
All catch the Eye, and raise the wond'ring Thought, 60
Till lively *Ranger* chides our long Delay,
Gambols around, then forward springs away.

Heav'n ! what Delights my active Mind renew,
When out-spread Nature opens to my View,
The Carpet-cover'd Earth of spangled white,
The vaulted Sky, just ting'd with purple Light ;
The busy Blackbird hops from Spray to Spray,
The Gull, self-balanc'd, floats his liquid Way ;
The Morning Breeze in milder Air retires,
And rising Rapture all my Bosom fires, 70
In Incense wafted to the Throne on high,
To him who form'd the Earth--the Air--the Sky,
Who gives me, Health and Vigour to enjoy,
Guides me e'en now, and guarded when a Boy--

Accept,

12 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

Accept, great GOD! the Fervour of my Pray'r,
And as before, continue still thy Care,
Oft as I view thee in Creation's Dress,
Be mine to praise thee, as 'tis thine to blefs.

While fervid Flights my lifted Fancy takes,
The wary Wood-cock rustles thro' the Brakes, 80
With hasty Pinions wings his rapid Course,
'Till Death pursues him, arm'd with double Force;
Each Gun discharg'd, and conscious of its Aim,
Afferts the Prize, and holds the dubious Claim,
'Till Chance decides the long contested Spoil,
Proclaims the Victor, and rewards his Toil.

His luckless Fate, immediate to repair,
The baffled Sportsman beats with forward Care,
Each bush explores, that plats the Hedge with Pride,
Brooks at its Feet, and Brambles at its Side-- 90

Another

Another Bird, just flushing at the Sound,
Scarce tops the Fence, then tumbles to the Ground.

Ah! what avails him now the varnish'd Die,
The Tortoise-colour'd Back, the brilliant Eye,
The pointed Bill that steer'd his vent'rous Way
From Northern Climes, and dar'd the boist'rous Sea;
To milder shores, in vain these Pinions sped,
Their Beauty blasted, and their Vigour fled.

Thus the poor Peasant, struggling with distress,
Whom rig'rous Laws, and rigid Hunger press, 100
In Western Regions seeks a milder State,
Braves the broad Ocean, and resigns to Fate;
Scarce well arriv'd, and lab'ring to procure
Life's free Subsistence, and Retreats secure,
Sudden! he sees the roving INDIAN nigh,
Fate in his Hand, and Ruin in his Eye--

Scar'd

14 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

Scar'd at the Sight, he runs, he bounds, he flies,
Till Arrow-pierc'd, he falls--he faints--he dies.
Unhappy Man! who no Extreme could shun,
By Tyrants banish'd, and by Chance undone; 110
In vain! fair Virtue fann'd the free-born Flame,
Now fall'n alike to Fortune and to Fame.

But why, my Muse! when livelier Themes I fought,
Why change the rural Scenes to sober Thought?
Why rouse the patriot Ardour in my Breast,
Useless it glows, when FREEDOM droops deprest?
Not mine to combat Lux'ry's lordly Stride,
My humble Lot forbids th' aspiring Pride,
Forbids to stop Depopulation's Hand,
That crushes Industry, and frights the Land, 120
That robs the Poor of half their little Store,
And Insurrection spreads from Shore to Shore.

These

These to prevent, be still the Statesman's End,
 And this the Task of Sov'reigns to attend;
 Be mine the Care, to range this spacious Plain,
 Try what its Thickets, and its Springs contain,
 Pursue the Game that to the Skies aspire,
 And purge the Æther with successive Fire,
 Spring o'er the Fence that bars my active Mind,
 And rouse my Friend that ling'ring stays behind, 130
 Guard the steep Bank, to catch with eager Pains
 The forward Bound, that scarce the Margin gains;
 Or loudly laugh, when diligently nice,
 He backward bends, and strikes the crackling Ice.

Oh Friendship! Name for ever lov'd, ador'd,
 Thou richest Gift, which Heav'n for Man has stor'd!
 To me more dear, tho' Mirth may have its Jest,
 Than all the Hoards, and Honours of the East;

C

When

When e'er thro' Life's more arduous Paths I bend,
 Be there to guide, and aid me to my End; 140
 Or when the Sports of rural Scenes I try,
 With Converse sweet, each Interval supply,
 In all Extremes of Business or of Ease,
 Be *there* to comfort, and be *here* to please.

And thou, dear Spaniel! Friend in other Form!
 Obsequious come, thy Duty to perform,
 Whose fond Affection ever glows the same,
 Lives in each Look, and vibrates thro' thy Frame;
 And thou, dear Pointer! never devious stray,
 But search the Plains, inquisitively gay, 150
 With length'ned Side, and sapient Nose inhale
 The floating Vapour of the scented Gale---
 Oft have I seen thee, when the balanc'd Year
 By LIBRA weigh'd rewarded CERES' Care,
 Thro'

Thro' new-shorn Fields with active Vigour bound,
Snuff the fresh Air, and traverse all the Ground;
Or cautious tread, and Step by Step survey,
With keenest Attitude, the tim'rous Prey;
Then Statue-like, with lifted Foot proclaim
The PARTRIDGE near, and certify the Game--- 160
Where e'er I range, whatever Sports pursue,
Be still attendant, and be still in View.

Nor thou, Reflection! soothing Power! disdain
These vacant Moments of the sportive Plain;
When with its Cares the busy World retires,
Its tasteless Follies, and its vain Desires,
Improv'd by Thee, let Nature's Beauties rise,
Expand my Heart, and brighten in my Eyes,
Or Fancy-dress'd in livelier Colours glow,
Glide in soft Strains, and gladden as they flow, 170
While the pleas'd MUSES, with auspicious Smile,
Breathe past'ral Music and the Time beguile.

Now

Now had the Sun, in Noontide Robes array'd
 Of fleecy Clouds, the subject World survey'd;
 Onward we move, to gain the Mountain's Side,
 That East and West extends in solemn Pride,
 With lofty Head that breathes the gelid Gale,
 Brow-beats the City, and o'erlooks the Vale;
 Adown its Face the trickling Riv'lets run,
 Spread at its Feet, and bathe them in the Sun: 180
 These to disclose, we trace the rugged Soil,
 And many a Shot repays the pleasing Toil;
 'Till tir'd at length with new-discover'd Game,
 We mark the Course reserv'd for future Fame.

As when the SPANIARDS, with unceasing Pains,
 Thro' CHILI rov'd to CHARCAS' barren Plains,
 Approach'd POTOSI's arduous Height that boasts
 The richest Treasures of the Southern Coasts;

The

The latent Veins they labour to explore
Of pregnant Mines that teem with sparkling Ore, 190
With rising Rapture spring them into Day,
And crown'd with Conquest, plan their Future Sway.

The Day advanc'd, and waning to the West,
Demands a Thought for Respite and for Rest,
Back to the City calls a sudden Eye,
Where vary'd Beauties all in Prospect lie;
The pointed Steeples menacing the Skies,
The splendid Domes, that emulously rise,
The lowly Hamlets scatter'd here and there,
That scarcely swell to breathe refreshing Air; 200
The Hedge-row'd Hills, and intermingled Vales,
The distant Villas fann'd by floating Gales;
And Eastward still, the wide extended Main
By Commerce cover'd, awes the solemn Scene.

These

These to behold, may please the vacant Mind,
 More pleasing far the Cottage of the Hind,
 That yonder smokes, by russet Hawthorn hedg'd,
 By Hay-yard back'd, and side long Cow-house edg'd:
 Oft have I there my Thirst and Toil allay'd,
 Approach'd as now, and dar'd the Dog that bay'd; 210
 The smiling Matron joys to see her Guests,
 Sweeps the broad Hearth, and hears our free Requests,
 Repells her little Brood that throng too nigh,
 The homely Board prepares, the Napkin dry,
 The new-made Butter, Rasher's ready Fare,
 The new-laid Egg, that's dress'd with nicest Care;
 The milky Store, for Cream collected first,
 Crowns the clean Noggin, and allays our Thirst;
 While crackling Faggots bright'ning as they burn,
 Show the neat Cup-board, and the cleanly Churn-- 220
 The modest Maiden rises from her Wheel,
 Who unperceiv'd a silent look would steal;

Call'd

Call'd she attends, assists with artless Grace,
 The Bloom of Nature flushing on her Face,
 That scorns the Die, which pallid Pride can lend,
 And all the Arts which Luxury attend.

With Fuel laden from the brambly Rock,
 Lo! forward comes the Father of his Flock,
 Of honest Front:---salutes with rustick Gait,
 Remarks our Fare, and boasts his former State, 230
 When many a Cow, nor long the Time remov'd,
 And many a Calf his spacious Pasture rov'd,
 'Till rising Rents reduc'd him now to three,
 Abridg'd his Farm, and fix'd him as we see:
 Yet thanks his God, what fails him in his Wealth
 He seeks from Labour, and he gains from Health:
 Then talks of Sport; how many Wild-ducks seen!
 What Flocks of Widgeon too had fledg'd the Green!
 'Till

22 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

'Till ev'ry 'PRENTICE dar'd the City shun,
Range the wide Field, and lift the level Gun. 240

While thus amus'd, and gladden'd with our Lot,
The hasty Ev'ning calls us from the Cot;
A small Gratuity dilates their Heart,
And many a Blessing follows as we part.
Nor you, ye Proud! their humble State disdain,
Their State is Nature's, hospitable, plain,
Transmitted pure from PATRIARCHAL Times,
Unfram'd, unfashion'd to Corruption's Climes--
To you unknown their Labours and their Race,
Alike unknown their Innocence and Peace; 250
Secure from Danger, as remov'd from Fame,
Their Lives' calm Current flows without a Name.

With Limbs refresh'd, with lively Tales and gay,
We homeward haste, and guile the tedious Way;

Each

Each Object view in wintry Drefs around,
 And eye the Dogs that wanton o'er the ground;
 The penfive Red-breast on the leafless Bough,
 And just beneath, the Fragrance-breathing Cow,
 While still more grateful, with her cleanly Pail,
 The ruddy Milkmaid hears a tender Tale 260
 From the lov'd Swain, who swells th' alternate Sigh,
 Leans on his Staff, and lures her side-long Eye,
 With artless Guise, his Passion to impart,
 With Looks that speak the Language of his Heart---
Her's was the sweetness of the Milk she press'd,
 And *his* the Candour which his Vows profess'd,
 A DAPHNE *she*, with rural Grace attir'd,
 A DAMON *he*, with faithful Love inspir'd:
 Thrice happy Pair! whom guiltless Joys adorn,
 Pure as the Eve, and constant as the Morn; 270
 No Pride-born Cares, to frustrate or control
 Your mutual Vows responsive to the Soul,
 D Till

24 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

'Till sacred HYMEN binds the nuptial Band,
And blends your Lives, a Blessing to the Land.

Hence, Contemplation lifts th' internal Eye,
Fix'd on the Love of PROVIDENCE on high,
That still impartial thro' the World extends
In bounteous Blessings vary'd to their Ends;
From BRITISH Verdure to SIBERIA'S SNOW, 280
Adapted Sweets in ev'ry Climate grow,
The rude TONGUSIAN, quiver'd for the Chace,
Feels Joys unknown to PERSIA'S splendid Race,
Thro' Wilds immense pursues the savage Brood,
At once his Pride, his Raiment and his Food,
No Diff'rence proves, but what from Fancy springs,
'Twixt tented TARTARS, and empalac'd Kings---
But soon the visionary Scene withdraws,
And active Sports solicit new Applause,
For yonder come---yet distant to the Eye,
The vagrant PLOVER wafted thro' the Sky; 290

Swift

Swift to the Hedge, on diff'rent Sides we run,
 That skirt the Copse, and hide the deadly Gun;
 Onward they move regardless of their State,
 A single Guide conducts them to their Fate---
 The sudden Thunder bursts upon their Head---
 The foremost fall, and all the rest are fled.

Thus where its Forests NIAGARA spreads,
 And wild OSWEGO all its Horror sheds,
 The Sons of BRITAIN march'd in vent'rous Pride,
 No Foe to front them, and no Caution guide, 300
 'Till ev'ry Tree with hidden Rage conspires,
 And ev'ry Shrub emits destructive Fires---
 What could they do? or where the Vengeance fly?
 They wheel---they drop,---and all or run or die;
 The Gun relentless no Compassion shows,
 And no Respect of diff'rent Objects knows;

Alike

Alike regardless, when its Fury's stir'd,
Of Man or Brute—a BRADDOCK or a Bird.

But while I thus its dire Effects attend,
'Tis Man alone must answer for the End; 310
The Gun, like Riches, claims no genuine Use,
But just as rul'd, will Good or Bad produce,
Whether it rolls the raging Tide of War,
Or only frights the Tenants of the Air,
For Empire levell'd, or for Health carefs'd,
The Motive, not the Mean, is curs'd or blest.

Now had the Twilight, veild in gloomy Gray,
Mourn'd the Departure of retiring Day,
A darker Hue the Face of Nature wears,
And scarce distinct the distant Town appears— 320
Back to our Mind, in swift Succession throng
(To cheat the Time, and steal the Road along)

The

The various Sports of all the Summer past,
 When ling'ring, long-Vacation came at last;
 Imagination fondly sports to tell,
 How many Grouse! how many Partridge fell!
 And quick transports me, gladden'd as I go,
 Where the proud GAULTIES lift their awful Brow,
 Oft did I there with lively Spirits run,
 Mount on their Back to meet the rising Sun, 330
 When toiling, panting, labour-spent and flow,
 I stopp'd to breathe:---And view'd the Plains below,
 And thee dear Village!* loveliest of the Clime!
 Fain would I name thee, but I can't in Rhime,†
 Where first my Years in youthful Pleasures past,
 And where in Age I hope to die at last;
 Fain would I dwell upon thy native Charms,
 Thy verdant Hills, and cultivated Farms--

* Tipperary.

† mansuri oppidulo, quod versu dicere non est.

HOR. SAT. V. L. 1.

But

But sudden rous'd, I see the Pointers *wind*,
 My brother-Sportsman pressing close behind, 340
 The grumbling Heath-cock feels an instant Wound,
 Adown he falls, and whirrs against the Ground--
 Again, methinks I see the Service spread,
 The cold Provisions on the Cakes of Bread,*
 The mountain Stream, of babling Accents, nigh,
 My Couch the Heath, my Canopy the Sky,
 ÆNEAS-like, I eagerly devour
 The Plates themselves †--the quarter'd Cakes of Flower,
 Like him arise new Conquests to pursue,
 Then end my Toil, and tell of all I knew. 350

So at the Close of toilsome, hardy Life,
 The vet'ran Soldier brags of glorious Strife,

*———Adorea liba per herbam
 Subjiciunt epulis, &c. VIR. ÆN. VII. 110.

†———Malisq. audacibus orbem
 Fatalis crusti, patulis nec parcere quadris;
 Heus! etiam Menfas consumimus inquit lūlus. IBID.

What

THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN. 29

What Dangers past, what Cities he had seen,
What Battles fought, when Thousands strew'd the Green,
'Till Fancy warm'd he seems to fight them o'er,
And tir'd at last, he braves and boasts no more.

At length arriv'd where DUBLIN's boasted Square,*
Rears its high Domes, yet spreads a healthful Air,
O'er the wide View my willing Eyes I cast,
And fill Remembrance with its Pleasures past, 360
Its shady Walks that lure the Noontide Gale,
And sweeter Breath of Love's enraptured Tale;
Its sparkling Belles that, arm'd in Beauty's Pride,
Wound as they pass, and triumph on each Side;
But now no more these Glories gild the Green--
Chill Night descends, and desolates the Scene.

The rising Moon, with delegated Sway,
Supplies the radiance of the distant Day,

* Stephen's Green.

Smiles on our Path, directs our wary Feet
 Thro' all the busy Tumults of the Street-- 370
 With head-long Pace *here* vagrant *Hawkers* scour,
 And *bloody News* from Lungs horrific pour,
There dull, discordant Ballad-Notes annoy,
 That mock the Crowd, with Love's fantastick Joy;
 The Cumb'rous Coach, the blazon'd Chariot shews
 Where lazy Pride, or lordly State repose;
 While close behind, the shiv'ring Female strays,
 Parted from Virtue, Innocence and Ease--
 She once the Darling of her Mother's Arms,
 Her Father's Pride, and blest with Blooming Charms, 380
 Thro' all the Village known for spotless Fame,
 Fair was her Beauty, fairer still her Name;
 'Till the sly Tempter urg'd insidious Suit,
 And lur'd her Weakness to forbidden Fruit,
 There perish'd Grace, her guardian Honour fled,
 And sad Remembrance mourns each Blessing--dead!

Expell'd

Expell'd the Paradise of native sway
 She wanders now to ev'ry Vice a Prey—
 A Prey to yonder Terror of the Night,
 (Avert, ye Gods! such Monsters from my Sight) 390
 The Bully dire: whose Front the Furies swell,
 And Scars dishonest mark the Son of Hell—
 In vain! she shrinks to shun his luckless Pace,
 Aw'd by the Terrors of his vengeful Face;
 To Scenes TARTAREAN, see! the Wretches hie,
 Where drench'd in Vice, they rave—or rot—or die.

Heav'n! how unlike the pure, the tranquil Scene,
 Where rural Mirth, and rural Manners reign;
 Where simple Cheer disclaims the Cares of Wealth,
 And fresh'ning Gales diffuse the Glow of Health; 400
 Where undisturb'd, unenvy'd, unconfin'd,
 Calm Reason rules each Movement of the Mind;

E

Where

Where mock'd Ambition seeks her last Retreat,
And proves the World, a Bubble or a Cheat.

As op'ning Streets with brighter Aspect smile,
Lo! ALMA MATER rears her rev'rend Pile,
Unfolds the Portals of her awful Square,
Where Arts and Science own her fost'ring Care;
Struck with the Scene that boasts Eliza's Fame,
We pause, and praise the consecrated Name, 410
The hallow'd Ground with softer Footsteps tread,
Where BERKELY reason'd, and where USHER read,
Where, born to combat an untoward Age,
Indignant SWIFT explor'd the Classic Page—
Hail! happy Shade!—with Griefs that once were thine
IERNE bends beneath thy patriot Shrine;
In Times like these, when gath'ring Woes impend,
She mourns her Dean, her Draper, and her Friend,

Her

Her exil'd Commerce, half-deserted Land,
 Her Harp unstrung, and manacled her Hand, 420
 While her pale Artists, ev'ry Comfort fled,
 Droop in her Streets, and die--for want of Bread.

Thus past the Day, and paid the pious Tear
 To worth deceas'd--to Virtues ever dear,
 Each fond Reflection rising in our Breast
 At length subsides, and yields to soothing Rest;
 Pleas'd we behold the bright'ning Fuel blaze,
 And hot Repast that gives Content and Ease,
 While keenest Appetites a zest bestow,
 Which listless Luxury can never know : 430
 The Cloth remov'd with Blessing for our Fare,
 We next the Bowl's convivial Juice prepare,
 Or the rich Grape's nectareous Bev'rage pour
 To raise the Heart, and cheer the social Hour,

When

34 THE ACADEMICK SPORTSMAN.

When Toil declining claims Refreshment's Smiles,
And mirthful innocence the Time beguiles.

With conscious Joy our Nets we then review,
And all the Conquests of the Day renew,
Boast of our Skill, and palliate where it fails,
For ev'n in Trifles human Pride prevails-- 440
Nor to Ourselves the feather'd Spoils confine,
But range them round for Friendship's sacred Shrine;
The rural Bliss redoubles in our Breast,
In pleasing others when ourselves are blest;
Nor you, my Friends! disdain what we adore,
We give with Pleasure, and would give you more,
Our Off'ring take, and as we wish survey
The grateful Produce of a WINTER'S DAY.

F I N I S.

